A REVIEW OF THE POLITE ARTS *IN FRANCE*,

At the Time of their Eſtabliſhment under Louis the XIVth,

COMPARED WITH

THEIR PRESENT STATE *IN ENGLAND:*

IN WHICH

THEIR NATIONAL IMPORTANCE, AND SEVERAL PURSUITS, ARE BRIEFLY STATED AND CONSIDERED.

IN

A LETTER to Sir JOSHUA REYNOLDS,

PRESIDENT of the ROYAL ACADEMY, and F. R. S.

BY VALENTINE GREEN,

Fellow of the Society of ANTIQUARIES, Mezzotinto Engraver to his MAJESTY, and to the Elector PALATINE; Member of the ROYAL ACADEMY, LONDON, and Profeſſor of the ELECTORAL ACADEMY, DUSSELDORFF.

"—— They order, ſaid I, this matter better in France ——"

YORRICK's Sentimental Journey. Vol. I.

LONDON:

Printed for T. CADELL, Bookſeller and Printer to the ROYAL ACADEMY, in the Strand.

M.DCC.LXXXII.

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MDCCLXXXII.

ADVERTISEMENT.

A Viſit to Paris, in the courſe of the laſt Summer, afforded opportunity to make ſome of the Remarks contained in the ſubſequent pages. The point of view from whence the Arts are contemplated, it is preſumed, is new; and that it ſhould thence preſent objects hitherto unobſerved, or not heretofore adverted to, will not, therefore, be thought extraordinary.

Similar Remarks were alſo made in a tour through Flanders, part of Germany, and Holland, in 1775, *but were ſuppreſſed, as inapplicable to the purpoſes of this Review; inaſmuch as that the progreſs of no particular School of Art, founded on principles at all agreeing with thoſe of our Royal Academy, could be adduced, on which to form a uſeful Compariſon.*

If the Province of the Protecteur *of the French Academy ſhould be thought to glance at that of the Preſident of the Engliſh Royal Academy, in the retroſpect had to the Government of the Pariſian School, Sir Joſhua Reynolds, perſonally, is totally*

out of the queſtion. As a Gentleman, and an Artiſt, it requires no teſtimony to prove, that none could more ably, or more honourably, have filled that Station. The Principle in the Inſtitution *will, then, obviouſly appear to be the ſole object of that diſquiſition.*

The limits of a Letter are too circumſcribed to allow of that full dilation on the objects preſented in this Addreſs, they deſerve, and thence they muſt appear to be given more as hints, than as ample and minute diſcuſſions of their importance.

Its conceived conſequence to the Reputation of the Britiſh Arts, will, it is hoped, ſhield this humble Attempt from the imputation of Travelled Impertinence.

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REVIEW, &c.

SIR,

THE princely ſtate in which the Polite Arts were ſeated in France, will ever remain as one of the brighteſt Ornaments of the reign of Louis the fourteenth: and ſo well was their importance underſtood by that able Miniſter Cardinal Mazarin, whom the King had appointed firſt *Protecteur* of the New Academy, that to nurture them with ſucceſs, he found, it was not only neceſſary that every ſource from whence information could be derived to the Artiſt, ſhould be laid open and placed within his reach, but that to make them Ornamental and Uſeful to the State, it was equally neceſſary to open a field for

their exertion, when they had obtained ſtrength to ſtand forth as a body matured under the auſpices of ſo glorious a Patronage. The Cardinal ſurvived not long enough to ſee this object completed; but he had in the Great Colbert, a ſucceſſor equally the friend of the Arts, and endowed with a ſpirit of enterprize and magnificence, that promiſed the iſſue of the labours of the French School to be, in the higheſt degree, honourable to its inſtitution, and not the leaſt of the glories to be atchieved by that conſummate Stateſman.

No ſooner therefore was the palace of the New Louvre completed, than, to give luſtre and eclat to his adopted favourites, the King threw it open for the reception of the Polite Arts; and, in the moſt decided, and unequivocal manner, held them forth the objects of his affection and patronage. The only abilities which had yet opened upon that nation, prior to this æra, were thoſe poſſeſſed by Vouet, Freminet, and Couſin; and it had not hitherto been at all attentive to the cultivation of works of taſte and elegance. In the eyes of that nation, however, this novel ſpectacle begat no mean jealouſies, although it had taken poſſeſſion of the moſt ſplendid palace of the metropolis; on the contrary, by thoſe who either would, or could,

reaſon on the ſubject, the inveſtigation was ſoon ſolved into a national benefit; and its conſequences, though not apparent to the view of the moment, were thought to have the Glory of the Monarch, and the Honour of the People for its object, and as ſuch met their unlimited confidence and eſteem. And in this opinion they were confirmed, on viewing the ſucceſs of their ſurrounding neighbours, who were become celebrated for their Genius, and admired for their refinements in thoſe elegant purſuits; and not without feelings repugnant to the ſpirit and vivacity of their country, could they exiſt in a ſtate of inferiority to thoſe over whom their proweſs, in other conteſts, had ſo often triumphed. Mean while, the King and his Miniſter, ſaw with complacency, the glory of that æra ariſe, with every auſpicious omen in its favour; and they already anticipated the delight and veneration of Poſterity, gratefully looking up to them, as the Founders of the Splendor, and the Protectors of the Genius of a great Kingdom, mighty in Arms, but, till that period, undiſtinguiſhed in Arts.

In Rome too, whither it was neceſſary the Profeſſors of the Arts ſhould reſort, to ſtudy the works of the great Maſters of that School, and draw information from the

pure fountain of the Ancient Greek Marbles, by which to form their own principles, a Reſidence worthy of Royalty, the Palace of Mancini was purchaſed, and appropriated to their purſuits; and in that, as well as in the Academy of Paris, the moſt perfect Models of all the celebrated Statues, were collected and arranged for their uſe.

To dignify their Studies, and to give ſtability to the precepts on which the principles of the Arts were founded, Le Brun, as Chancellor of the Academy, on the plan pointed out to him by Colbert, gave the firſt diſcourſe on Painting, by publicly deſcanting on the beauties and defects to be ſought after, or guarded againſt, by the Student, which he elucidated by remarks on Raphael's celebrated picture of St. Michael and the Devil. Theſe diſcourſes are deſervedly admired, and many of their principles adopted in the modern ſyſtem, with advantage to the Student, and honour to the Preceptor.

On ſo broad a baſis, ſo deeply laid, and ſo firmly eſtabliſhed, what might not be expected from the exertions of impatient Genius, ſtruggling to get free from the ſhackles of prejudice, and panting to enter the liſts, in this new and delightful field. Public expectation was not diſap-

diſappointed by lukewarm patronage, or indolent ability; and the generous emulation lighted up in the breaſts of the Artiſts, by the munificence of the Prince, kept pace with his liberality. If he held forth the Wreath, the Hiſtoric Canvas glowed with the fire and the ſentiment of nature, and the Marble ſtarted into life! A new Creation was ſeen riſing around; and the wonder of the times was turned on the value of the diſcovery of ſo much ſtrength of invention, ſo much power of imagination, and ſuch excellence of execution, ſpontaneouſly flowing in uniſon with the Royal fiat, which had ſaid—"Let there be Genius, and it was ſo."

On the return of Mary de Medicis to Paris, in the latter end of the year 1620, ſhe found the New Palace of the Luxembourg finiſhed: and having been a witneſs of the powers of the pencil of Rubens, during her reſidence in Flanders, ſhe invited him to undertake the decoration of its Gallery. The completion of that magnificent work added new vigour to the exertions of the Academicians of Paris, who while they applauded and approved the abilities of a Rival Artiſt of another School, they nobly ſought his ſubjugation to their own powers, by conteſting with him for the Palm, not by detracting from his merits, but

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by endeavouring to ſurpaſs them in their own works. The Strife was honourable; and to the preſent hour, Paris, and its environs, enjoy, to infinite advantage, the effects of that competition. The Gallery of the Luxembourg was then the only public teſtimony the Arts in France had to offer; and it was there their Standard was firſt reared, in oppoſition to the Italian Schools, if we except the palace of Fontainbleau, in which Freminet, and Couſin, both French Artiſts, aſſiſted the Italians, employed by Francis the firſt, in its decoration. No circumſtance could have occurred ſo opportunely, to ſet the kindling fire, in the French Academy, in a blaze, as did this work of Rubens. And, from that time, no foreign auxiliary was called in to the decoration of their public edifices, which were now unreſervedly thrown open to the Pencils of their native Artiſts. Their Churches, and their Palaces, were ambitious to receive Aſſiſtances from their Powers; and through the Ancient Notre Dame, to the Modern Ecole Militaire, the Gallic Genius has, with ſignal honour, breathed free and uninterrupted. Perhaps no period was more propitious to the Elegant Arts, ſince the time of Raphael, than that in which the French School was formed. Italy ſtill retained its glories in the Schools of Florence, Parma, Bologna, and Venice, all which acted

on other States as noble incentives to the exertion of local Genius. Spain had dropped a portion of its rigidity, and the hinges of the Eſcurial were turned to admit the entrance of the Arts, led by Titian, and ſucceeded by Velaſquez and Murillo. A diſtinguiſhed Writer of our own Country, has placed their progreſs in ſo honourable a light, that it is doubtful whether the Patronage of Charles the fifth, and of Philip the ſecond, yields to any other in Europe, than thoſe of Julius the ſecond, and Leo the tenth, evinced in the inſtances of Raphael and Michael Angelo. The Flemings had begun their race, and proceeded honourably and ably on the courſe, in many inſtances, excluſive of the aids of Rubens and Vandyck, who were the great leaders of that body of Artiſts. The Dutch were advancing, and had formed a very reſpectable Phalanx of accurate, attentive, and laborious inveſtigators of nature, in a manner expreſſive of nice and perſpicuous obſervation. And the names of Teniers, Rembrandt, Vandevelde and others, emit a radiance on the Arts that has won many votaries to their ſhrine, while it has reflected great honour on their native School. In England, too, the flame had begun, and its heat was promoted by the caſual viſit of Rubens to the Court of London, not indeed in the purſuit of the Arts, but in the Character of Envoy from

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the States of Brabant. At his leiſure, thoſe works were produced which embelliſh the Chapel of Whitehall, and a few other Pictures, diſperſed in different collections of the Nobility in the Court of James the firſt. But his pupil Vandyck, whoſe reſidence here was of longer duration, and whoſe employment being ſo much about the Perſon of the King, and thoſe of the Royal Family, that Dobſon, Cooper, and Johnſon, inſpired with ardour in the purſuit of a Profeſſion countenanced by the Sovereign, exerted themſelves ſo ſucceſsfully, as to procure them the approbation of their own, and the admiration of the preſent times. But the national troubles which broke out about that time, and ended in the Death of the King, obſcured the luſtre which the Arts had begun to diffuſe, and to which the King himſelf lent his perſonal ſupport, by not only forming the moſt magnificent collection of Pictures then known in Europe, but alſo amuſing himſelf often in Drawing and Deſigning. From that period, to the eſtabliſhment of the Engliſh School, Sir Peter Lely, Sir James Thornhill, and Sir Godfrey Kneller, bore up the reputation of the Arts with honour to their Abilities, and from their hands they have been received, and are now yielded up with accumulated intereſt to the Public. But the French ſeemed to have engaged the moſt ſeriouſly in

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the purſuit of thoſe refinements the imitative Arts were ſuſceptible of; and from that period it is, that we are to date the dawn of that day, which has ever ſince, through their medium, ſhed ſuch refulgence through their public edifices, illumining the gloom of the Cloyſter of their *Religieux*, and adding new ſplendour to the Palaces of their Princes.

EVERY meaſure that was adopted in the erection of this School, ſeemed to have had its foundation in the ſoundeſt policy, and to have taken in every object that could ſtimulate perfection, and render permanent the advantage it had obtained. It ſhared in the wiſdom of their national councils, and political meaſures, from the hands into which it was committed. It was not the crude ſuggeſtions of an over-heated zeal, nor the contrivance of individual intereſt, that gave it the ſolidity and firmneſs it poſſeſſed; but, founded on the ſame foreſight, and depth of penetration, which had often outſtripped the moſt vigilant opponents, it ſhared in advantages that could alone be procured by the powers of ſuperior perception, and thence flouriſhed beyond all competition. The Arts were found to be capable of a Public Good, or they had been ſtill unknown among them. It was the buſineſs of the Mi-

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nifter to aſcertain that fact, and when known, to put the engine in motion. Thus reaſoned the French; and hence it is, that at the preſent moment, the foundation of their School of Art cannot be ſhaken, but with the extremeſt convulſion of the State: nor will any of its Sovereigns be hardy enough to encounter the odium that would be attendant on any hoſtile proceeding againſt an inſtitution from whence ſo much honour has been derived to the nation. At this moment its vigour is unimpaired, and its principles are as active as in the time of the fourteenth Louis, ſo far as regards its funds, and its cultivation of Genius. No abatement of its ardour, no interruption of its aim has aſſailed it, through all the exigencies of national diſtreſs; but the ſame provident protection that called it into exiſtence, and ſhielded its infant ſtate, ſtill pervades all its purſuits, and gives energy to all its operations. Protection may excite, but cannot create Genius: but the Protection the French School has been cheriſhed by, has blended humanity with its influence: and although the powers of their firſt Maſters may have been caught up into heaven, and their Spirit failed to deſcend on their Succeſſors, the ſtream, like the overflowings of the Nile, whilſt it continues to furniſh nurture for the raiſing of Genius to the moſt exalted eminence, whenever Providence,

dence, in its wiſdom, may permit it to reviſit their abode, it yields a recompence to its Members, that ſolaces their labours with comfort, and empowers them to exult in their decline of life, that they had been thought to deſerve honourably of their Country. Even the Hoſpital of Invalides, heaves no ſigh in reproach of the diſtinction. The Corps was ſelect, not numerous; it was honourable, but not expenſive. And it became the dignity of a great nation, as well to reward the ſignal efforts of the Genius of Peace, as its Martial Spirit: their views indeed had different directions, but it was enough that each had been ſeen eagerly advancing the glory of their Country.

The great figure the French Academy has made in the commonwealth of the Arts, has been chiefly owing to its government being placed in the hands of Noblemen of the firſt rank, and in poſſeſſion of the firſt employments of the State; and the good conſequences of that ſyſtem, are evident in it to the preſent moment. The Patron, and the Artiſt, were diſtinct characters: it was the province of the firſt to guide and guard; it was the wiſh of the laſt to deſerve and receive Protection. Both were under the eye of the Sovereign, whoſe care had been not to mock the Arts, by putting them under the direction of Ignorance, or Indifference; either of which muſt be fatal

to their exiſtence; but added to the Royal, they received Miniſterial Protection, uncontaminated by political diſtinction, or the bias of party; and honoured by the Affection of the Prince, they enjoyed alſo the Perſonal Regard of his moſt confidential Servants. Above the littleneſs of contrivance to ſuppreſs Genius; too much the friend of his Country to palm pretenders on its eſteem, under the ſhelter of his influence; the decided Patron of the Arts, its Profeſſors had perfect repoſe in his counſels, and perfect reliance on his juſtice. Their deſires made known to their Prince through ſuch a medium, excited no jealouſy, alarmed no ſuſpicion; open and acceſſible to all its Members, no cabal dared to miſrepreſent the wiſhes, or impede the intereſt of an individual. Competent to decide, no matter was ſuffered to appear before the Sovereign, but had, in aid to its own propriety, the countenance of the *Protecteur* added to its recommendation and ſupport; and the ungracious trouble of inveſtigating their concerns, farther than an Aſſent to their public undertakings, or an Approbation of their finiſhed labours, never approached the Royal Breaſt. The Miniſter ſtood the Palladium of riſing Genius, an impracticable boundary, ſeparating a Royal Academy from a Company of Painters, by which all combination was broke, all profeſſional

profeſſional bickerings ſilenced, and a local tyranny, inimical to every generous principle, deſtroyed. To have ſuffered ſuch Abilities as were enrolled in the firſt records of the Pariſian Academy, to have remained inactive, would have been a reproach too ſevere for its *Protecteur* to have ſuſtained; to have employed them on trivial objects, would have been equally diſgraceful. It was a duty which had devolved on his ſhoulders from the nature of the Inſtitution, and muſt be fulfilled without perſonal regard. But in the hands appointed to guide their movements, nothing of doubt remained of the moſt flattering iſſue. And ſo well were theſe points attended to, with ſuch ardour and ſpirit were they entered upon, that in a very ſhort period, ſo numerous were the proofs of the Ability and Induſtry of the French Artiſts; ſo different an aſpect had the Metropolis put on; ſo much was the public taſte improved, and private life embelliſhed, that to the preſent hour it has the appearance of the Work of Ages, and has deſcended from them a miracle of exertion, and a national benefit.

The Spirit of the imitative Arts ſet afloat, like

" The Poet's eye, in a fine frenzy rolling,
" Doth glance from heaven to earth, from earth to heav'n,

" And

" And as imagination bodies forth
" The form of things unknown, the Poet's pen
" Turns them to ſhapes, and gives to airy nothing
" A local habitation, and a name."

From her creative powers, the terrors of the arm of Alexander were again made viſible, and the actions of Gods, and Men, which have excited the reverence of the Heathen, and called forth the virtues of the Chriſtian World to imitate, have been preſented to view, " in ſuch " queſtionable ſhapes, that we muſt ſpeak to them!" So audible have been their voices, ſo convincing their ſentiments, that Ages celebrated for their virtues, have thought them, and adopted them, as the cleareſt mediums through which to render permanent honours to their Gods, their Heroes, their Lawgivers, and to all thoſe exalted Characters, who, having befriended Mankind, deſerved to be held up as examples worthy the imitation of Poſterity, and entitled to its veneration.

THE national bias of a People, conſidered as ſuch, is, in many inſtances, amiable and praiſe-worthy: and Genius, dedicating its powers to the glory of its Country, is a ſpectacle grateful to every ſenſe we entertain of moral, and religious duty. That divine principle, which ties us to our Country,

Country, and to our Relatives, and throws a radiance even over their wretchedneſs, giving it charms to win us to their intereſt, in preference to our own, being of the pureſt flame, muſt be honoured where it is ſeen. Every good citizen has felt it, every honeſt man applauds it. Let then the offerings of the Arts, under the ſmiles of Louis le Grand, be more approved than condemned, more imitated than decried. In the Place de Victoire he is deified in the higheſt excellence of Sculpture; in the Cielings of Verſailles, Painting has lifted him to the ſkies! Thoſe tributes were his due. The Metropolis, but for his magnificent ſpirit, had remained to theſe days, a rude aſſemblage of habitations, huddled together with as little conveniency as elegance. And of thoſe ſtructures, which form the firſt features of the City of Paris, they chiefly own him as their founder, renovator, or perfector. To which muſt be added, the raiſing of thoſe ſplendid Palaces of Verſailles, Marly, and the Hoſpital of Invalides. His example influenced his Nobles, and the Palais Royal, the Mazarin College, and the Sorbonne, were edifices of the ſame reign. To him, as a King, the monarchy of France is no leſs indebted, than are the Arts of Peace, in his ſedulous attention to the embelliſhments of private life; hence, no breath of theſe times carries his name to the

ear, without wafting a portion of grateful incenſe to his memory. But as it is not my intention to enter on a *Catalogue* of the Works of the French School, or to give a regular ſeries of their Productions in the different reigns, I muſt refer the inquiſitive on thoſe heads, to the peruſal of thoſe abſtracted Indexes the "*Voyage Pittoreſque de* "*Paris*," and the "*Voyage Pittoreſque des Environs de* "*Paris*," in which they will find what the Artiſts of that nation have been employed in, from the time they were firſt aſſembled as a body, to the preſent æra, not however on an extenſive and deſcriptive plan, but as *Ciceroni* to the Stranger, who may be in ſearch of the Works of Art; nor do thoſe Volumes refer but to a part of their Productions, as there is not a Palace, or a Public Edifice, through the whole extent of that great Kingdom, that has not more than one inſtance of their Abilities to boaſt. And it is evident, that ſomething more, than ſimply the weight of the Arts, gave circulation to their numerous Productions. To an influence well poiſed, and an intereſt ſupported by hands that could command attention, the Artiſts were indebted for Practice and Reward, and the Public freed from the abuſes of ignorant pretenders. No Work in which their Profeſſion was concerned, or to which it was neceſſary, but was given to

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their charge; nor were any left to repine the want of opportunity to aſſert their claim on Public Patronage. Ingrafted on the State, and made an appendage of its ſplendour, the French School has obtained that ſtability of rank and ſupport, for which ſimilar Inſtitutions have languiſhed, and for the want of which they have ultimately expired.

In a Country in which the Arts have enjoyed Royal Patronage for ſo many years as they have in Britain, it is a ſevere reproach to us, as an informed and liberal-minded nation, that it is ſtill neceſſary to ſay, and to prove, that they ought to be conſidered as more than a *Superfluity* among us; and that it is ſtill neceſſary to prove, that by a proper, and prudent management, they might be productive of the moſt ſolid and laſting advantages to the empire at large. It is however by analogy, and compariſon, that thoſe proofs may be adduced to moſt effect, on minds habituated to make deductions from arithmetical calculations only, and which place confidence in nothing which has happened, to draw them into Speculations howſoever founded, that have not immediate proof to eſtabliſh their value and importance. Yet ſhall theſe ſame œconomical, prudent, and *well informed* Individuals,

lend their reaſon, and their fortunes, to the moſt groſs, and glaring impoſtures on themſelves, and proſtitute both to the brilliancy of a puff direct, if it be iſſued from the roſtrum of an Auction-room, and while the Artiſts, whoſe names they hear ſo freely uſed to the moſt unworthy purpoſes, exiſt no longer to detect the falſhood of the practice, or to chaſtiſe the indignities offered to their Names and Reputations. But of theſe things, ſomewhat perhaps too much.—

Let it then be ſuppoſed, for a moment, that when Raphael was commiſſioned to paint any of his great works, for inſtance, the School of Athens, or the Transfiguration, that it was deemed by the prudent Public, to have been, in Leo the tenth, an extravagant undertaking, the exuberance of an overgrown revenue, that could poſſibly have given birth to ſo eccentric a purſuit; and that the reſult, as the project might be ſuppoſed to have had its origin in imprudent exceſs, would terminate in diſgrace, and mortification. But as theſe inferences were drawn by mere Prudence, ſurrounded with the narroweſt prejudices, unable to trace the conſequences of a Profeſſion fraught with the moſt exalted ſentiments, and armed with the moſt powerful conviction, it was no wonder it ſhould

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fall into errors of the moſt humiliating kind. Without reference to what of moral or religious inſtructions, the Arts have in their diſpoſal to promulgate; without reference to what improvement they bring home to underſtandings of all deſcriptions; that they preach alike intelligibly to the rational and informed, as well as to leſs cultivated minds; that the cuſtoms and manners of other nations, and of other times, are produced to the judgment of all men to decide upon and compare; that the actions of the great and virtuous of every people, and of every diſtinction, are held forth in the moſt attracting points of view, articulating with the moſt perſuaſive eloquence, "Go and do thou likewiſe;" that Hiſtory, Sacred and Prophane, receive the moſt uſeful comments and ſupport from the Pencil, and their precepts made to ſtrike more deeply on the heart, than either oral tradition, or written evidence could poſſibly effect, in characters intelligible to all nations, addreſſed to the comprehenſion of all languages; that the ſhame of vice, and its concomitant train of evils, which have rendered life miſerable to many, and infamous to others, have received puniſhment of the moſt exemplary kind, from the ſeverity of their laſh; that theſe effects are among the reſources, and the uſes the Arts are capable of; and further, that by other aids they can be tranſ-

mitted to poſterity, and diſſeminated over the whole globe with the ſame force of conviction, and equal efficacy: yet ſhall the ignorant preſume to arraign their expediency, and the illiterate decry their utility, to the diſgrace of the enlightened ſtate of modern manners, and the intelligence of preſent times! To urge theſe points at the preſent moment, is a taſk painful in the extreme: but while conviction of the mortifying neceſſity, annually ſtares us in the face in our Exhibitions, a ſenſe of the dignity of the Profeſſion, and a ſpirit ſuperior to the dull routine of their purſuits, cannot but deplore, cannot but ſuffer in the diſgrace they have received, and are likely to ſuſtain, till (unleſs timely reſcued from the degrading thraldom) they are finally extinguiſhed from amongſt us.

But when theſe ſuperficial examiners are told, that the exiſtence of modern Rome is upheld, as much by the reputation it has acquired from the vaſt ſtores it poſſeſſes of the excellencies of the Arts; that the character of a Raphael has conduced as much to its advantage, ſince the time of Leo the tenth, and Julius the ſecond, as the reputation it has of being founded on the ruins of the ancient Emporeum, that once ſubjugated the world to its yoke; when they are told that the ſanctity of its Pontiffs,

tiffs, and the proceſſions of its Hoſts, have not attracted the veneration of Europe more than the wonders of the Vatican, the grandeur of their Public Edifices, and the admirable beauty of their Statues. Let then the caution of calculation, and the parſimony of prudence, look at the object thus preſented, and on a fair eſtimation of its value, pronounce, (ſeeing that even Rome itſelf, but for the advantage it has of poſſeſſing theſe ſame *ſuperfluities*, would be little better than a ſolitary cell of monks, and, compared to what it now is, a deſerted village,) if a ſource of more certain riches, of more ſolid worth, of more moral dignity, or of more honourable eſtimation, can be countenanced, by a wiſe and a great nation, than to give the Arts they poſſeſs the fulleſt ſupport, and the ampleſt room for the unreſtrained exertion of all their powers. To do leſs, is at once to diſgrace Protection, deſtroy Genius, and root up every principle of aſpiring to excellence, from among men. If, indeed, it were Rome alone that could be held forth in ſupport of the idea of the importance of the Arts, as a national benefit, the appeal I have to urge on that head, would loſe much of its force, and, in fact, leave but a ſmall object in the ſcale of expediency, to induce trial to be made of their ſtrength, compared with the value of their aggregate worth, when ſuperadded to the

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numerous and ineſtimable treaſures of other cities on the continent. But the evidences are too multitudinous for recapitulation, and the fact too obvious to need further illuſtration.

It has often been urged as a queſtion, whether the introduction of the elegant Arts into a State, did not, in their effect, introduce an effeminacy in the manners of the People, by leading them to refinements which enervated their vigour of mind, and finally gave them up to luxury and indolence, evils that include in their train, ſlavery of the moſt abject kind, and a degeneracy of principle more inſupportable than even a ſtate of nature? To meet this queſtion fairly; the only danger the Arts can preſent, is that we have already encountered, in their having been called in to idle and vain purpoſes, made ſubſervient to trivial pleaſures, and oſtentatious parade, in which neither ſentiment, or dignity, or national virtue were appealed to, or intended to be applied. As thoſe "baſeleſs fabrics" begin, ſo they end, in Time abuſed, Money diſſipated, Folly entertained, and Genius perverted. But are abſurdities like theſe, to be attributed to latent, dangerous principles, lurking in the Arts? Reaſon revolts at the injuſtice of the ſuggeſtion, and abhors it as an impious pro-

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phanation of their divinity. The Arts are to be conſidered as another means of communicating ideas, and holding up important facts to the ſenſes, as Hiſtory has recorded them, and as public faith has received them. In this character they act as the moſt clear teſtimonials, and the moſt authentic vouchers; alike ſerviceable to future, as to preſent times. Nor do we know any language, any art, that is to be preferred to them in thoſe ſervices, or the perpetuating of events, whether of national concerns, or local occurrences, in a manner that may be comprehended without the poſſibility of miſtake, by every order and degree of men. When, therefore, it is ſeen that their purſuits are the promoting of knowledge, and the diſſeminating of virtue among mankind; that they form one of the moſt ſacred depoſits of the characters of the great and good; that they are the heralds of fame, whoſe good report every wiſe man would covet, and every virtuous man eſteem; inaſmuch, that to become an object worthy of their attention, more than a common ſhare of eſtimation among our fellow-citizens, is neceſſary to recommend us. Let it, then, no longer be ſaid the Arts are trifling in the account of our progreſs in the paths of wiſdom, or that they may be diſpenſed with as unneceſſary to the improvement of our morals, and well-being in life.

It has been urged, farther, that they have been uſed to immoral purpoſes, and that their effects are thence to be dreaded. There is no denying the fact. But the ſame charge lies againſt Literature itſelf, and miſchief is perhaps more to be feared from that ſource, as it flows more ſecretly, and its poiſon is in that degree the more fatal to the intereſts of virtue. Yet who is bold enough to ſuggeſt the expediency of the extirpation of learning, becauſe it is liable to be perverted to diſſolute ends? Let but the right bias be given to their operations, and all theſe clamours muſt ſubſide. Employed on important objects, and ſet on in queſt of honourable fame, they muſt, indeed, be of the infernal kind, thus "to a radiant angel linked," to "prey on garbage." But it is neither in the Arts, nor in the learning of ſchool-men, that the evil complained of, or dreaded, has its foundation: the vice is in ourſelves, and there the reform ſhould be begun. Nor is it to the one, or the other, that luxury, or effeminacy of manners, is to be aſcribed. As aids to humanity, as auxiliaries to all that is praiſe-worthy on earth, they are indiſpenſible; and in the degree in which their abſence in any nation is diſcernable, vice and injuſtice, cruelty, and ſavage manners, are found to prevail.

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—But to reſume the purſuits of the Arts in France. "More has been done than meets the eye." At the time when all the attic ſpirit was ſuppoſed to have been evaporated, and their priſtine vigour ſubſided; at the time when a perfect ſlumber was thought to have prevailed over all the imagination of the preſent School, and to have wrapt it up in ſupine inactivity, have they been invoking the ſhades of their anceſtors, to reaſſert their ancient claims to renown, and again to diſpute the prize with every competitor of every School. I drop the figurative to take up ſober matter-of-fact relation. The Pariſian Academy is now aſſembling the works of all their great maſters; and by a thorough renovation of them, in whatſoever parts they may have been impaired by time, or accident, they will ſet them before an applauding people with all their original ſplendour, and by their ability, and care, in that uſeful operation, be preſerved, to the benefit and admiration of future ages. To give honourable reception to thoſe Pictures and Statues, the upper apartments of the New Louvre are under preparation; and through the whole extent of that magnificent palace, a length of upwards of 1300 feet, poſſeſſing half of the whole ſpace between Pont Royal, and Pont Neuf, new lights are introducing from its roof and ſides, in addition

to thoſe it originally poſſeſſed, ſome of which, will alſo, neceſſarily, undergo a reform, in order to produce a regular, impartial, and equal diſtribution of light, through the whole range of the gallery. In addition to thoſe works of the French School, will be collected, the numerous and valuable Pictures, which for want of room, are huddled together in the moſt unfavourable manner, in and about the Palace of Verſailles, to the amount of ſome thouſands, by the beſt Italian, and other Maſters, and of the firſt order. The whole ſuite of the Luxembourg Gallery, by Rubens, together with the moſt ſelect of thoſe that are arranged on the floors of thoſe apartments, among which, thoſe of the French Ports, by Vernet, will be reſtored to the rank they ſo eminently deſerve. That choice and ineſtimable work of Le Sueur, the life of St. Bruno, lately in the Cloiſter of the Chartreux, are removed, and under preparation for their re-appearance in this grand aſſemblage of Arts. The Battles of Alexander, by Le Brun; jointly with all ſuch fugitive works as may be found diſperſed in the different *depots* of the Royal Palaces, whoſe merits, in the opinion of the Academy, may entitle them to ſo honourable a diſtinction, will aſſiſt in forming this magnificent collection. And, in further addition, the beſt and moſt perfect Statues, Buſts, and other Sculptures, of

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their own, and other Maſters, will be ſelected, and with the Pictures arranged, and claſſed under their ſeveral and diſtinct Schools, affording, at one view, to the eye of the Connoiſſeur, the various principles and ſyſtems, on which the different Profeſſors have founded their practice, fully illuſtrated, by ſome of their moſt capital productions. This reſurrection of their ancient ſpirit, will form an epoch in the Academy of Paris, and infuſe into its abated powers, an energy that may prove beneficial to future undertakings; and make its influence operate through all its claſſes, in a degree flattering to the importance of the Profeſſion, and reflect ſignal honour on the projector of the meaſure. I will not enter on an anticipation of the particular effects it will produce in the circle of the Arts; nor venture ſo far on the grounds of prophecy, as to augur its certain conſequences; but that it muſt eventually be found an expedient fraught with the moſt ſolid advantages to the City of Paris more eſpecially, and acquire to the kingdom at large, the higheſt reputation for liberality of ſentiment, although ſeen to have taken aim at the ſubſtantial benefit it holds out in reverſion; and, laſtly, as a new inſtance of the importance of cultivating the fine Arts, on the moſt extended ſcale, I have not the ſmalleſt heſitation to foretell, notwithſtanding my prediction,

ſhould it fail of proof, may, in about four years from the preſent time, be held up in deriſion of my ſagacity.

The more this meaſure is conſidered, the more its importance riſes in our admiration of its ſingular propriety. The great luminary of the Italian School, is painfully beheld in its decline; in a very few years the fineſt works of Raphael muſt yield to the depredations of time, and to the periſhable ſituations in which they have been depoſited. It is not difficult to calculate, what will be the event of their having totally diſappeared; or to foreſee the ardency with which inferior Schools will aſſert their plea for precedence, when that firſt of names is blotted from the rolls of the Roman Painters.

"Ariſe! ye glimmering Stars of Wit,
"For lo! the Sun of Verſe is ſet,"

exclaimed ſome paſſionate friend to poetic fire, when Pope ceaſed to adorn our language with his numbers. A Raphael ſhall thus become the ſubject of future ſorrow, while his equal will be ſought for in vain. It is not preſuming too much on the talents of a neighbouring nation, to ſuppoſe ſhe will neglect her own intereſt, or abate of her own importance, ſo much as to be wholly ſilent on that ſubject,

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when ſuch a monument of her Genius is extant, as will be this formidable aſſemblage of its glories, to ſecond the claim to precedence. The paſſage of the Alps will be deſcribed as more painful to the Traveller, and their dangers more magnified to his apprehenſion. Difficulties new, and unſurmountable, will be ſtarted to obſtruct his devotions at the ſhrine of Original Genius; and he will be induced to avoid the fatigue of ſearching after the little more of perfection, that may exiſt in the ſtores of Italy, than what Paris will then preſent him, without further toil or hazard.

If in times like theſe, ſuch an attention is thought neceſſary to be given to the mere revival of the Polite Arts, we may fairly conclude there has been more than ideal benefit reſulting to that nation, from the plan adopted by Louis the fourteenth, in giving them an eſtabliſhment in his dominions. And this concluſion is fully confirmed, when we advert to the ſteps Flanders is taking on ſimilar grounds, ſtimulated by the ſame motives. The Emperor, in his late viſit to the Netherlands, is ſaid to have ſuggeſted the propoſal of forming a Flemiſh Gallery, and to have honoured it with promiſed aſſiſtance. And that to carry this intention into immediate execution,

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it only remains to determine whether Bruſſels, as the metropolis of the States of Auſtrian Brabant, and where its Court reſides, or Antwerp, the city in which the moſt capital of the Works of Rubens are depoſited, ſhould have the preference of having the Gallery eſtabliſhed in it. This matter, however, it is moſt probable, will be decided in favour of Antwerp; as the Collection is meant to form an object, to which the name of the Flemiſh School is to be affixed, it would indeed be deficient in its title, if the Works of that Great Maſter were not made the corner-ſtone of the Structure. And farther, as thoſe Works are ſo diſpoſed as not to admit a poſſibility of their removal, being moſtly in the Churches of that city, and the aſſembling of thoſe of other maſters being more practicable, they muſt be placed near his, to form the collection as powerfully as their combined abilities can effect. This plan, however, although directed to the ſame object, differs in one reſpect from that of Paris, as moſt of the Pictures, Statues, &c. of which this Gallery is to be compoſed, will be preſented by the Nobility and Gentry of the States, reſerving to themſelves their right in them, and a power of deviſing that right by will, to their deſcendants; in conſideration of which, certain privileges will be ceded to them in the inſtitution. Vienna, it is

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alſo affirmed, will receive a like eſtabliſhment from the munificence of the Emperor.

It is an extraordinary circumſtance, and worthy of remark, that Rubens has had the ſingular honour of having by the merit, value, conſequence, magnitude, and number of his Works, been inſtrumental to, if not wholly the cauſe of, the founding of three ſeveral Schools of Art on the continent; namely, that of Paris by his Hiſtory of Mary de Medicis, in the Luxembourg Palace; that of Antwerp, by the Works above alluded to; and, laſtly, that of Duſſeldorff in Germany, one entire wing of which Gallery is poſſeſſed by forty-ſeven of his Pictures, among which is his celebrated Fall of the Angels.

We can, with temper, hear the Church of St. Peter at Rome extolled as the firſt Structure in the world, while St. Paul's ranks as ſecond, and is ſo little ſhort of the perfections of the firſt. We can, with patience, hear of the Rialto at Venice, and the vain-boaſting of the grandeur of the lumber of Pont Neuf, threatning to dam up the meandering of the Seine, while we have a bridge of iron binding the rapid Severn within its arch, and thoſe of Weſtminſter, and Black-Friars, ſtretching themſelves over

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the majeſtic tide of the Thames. L'Hotel Royal des Invalides, at Paris, may exult in its beautiful dome, and glory in the munificence of its foundation, without hurting our feelings, while the Royal Hoſpital of Greenwich, can vie with their Palaces in magnificence, and its ample revenues can ſo comfortably ſupply the wants of our naval defenders, worn out in the ſervice of their country. The parallel may be carried on with advantage to Britain, in the learned Sciences, Poetry, Philoſophy, the œconomical Arts, and various other inſtances; but in the Polite Arts, we are ſtruck dumb, and ſcarcely a paltry city on the continent but inſults our weakneſs in that vulnerable part, and looks upon the arguments of Monteſquieu as irrefragable, the irony of the Abbé du Bois as founded, and the deductions of the Abbé Winckelman, to prove that nature never meant the heavy atmoſphere of Britain to be productive of Original Genius, as a doctrine incontrovertibly eſtabliſhed, notwithſtanding Mr. Profeſſor Barry has ſo inconteſtibly refuted them in his able reply to the diſquiſitions of the philoſopher, and the heterogeneous and viſionary arguments of the ſpeculating Fathers. But why this ſtigma is ſtill ſuffered to remain upon us, and why it has not hitherto received radical refutation, is the point towards which I am now verging; namely, a review of the

purſuits the Engliſh School has been forced upon, ſince its eſtabliſhment amongſt us.

An hiſtorical account of its inſtitution, is by no means neceſſary to the preſent enquiry: it was neither a hiſtory of the Arts, or their modes of practice, that I propoſed to diſcuſs; but it was what is more eſſentially intereſting to them, their importance as a National object, and their honour as a Profeſſion. If neither belong to them, I have loſt my aim; the opinion, and the practice of every other nation in Europe is, however, on the ſide I have taken, and in ſuch a cauſe, a more able caſuiſt would have every credit to expect, and no diſgrace to fear, therefore, *nil deſperandum*, I proceed.

The annual Exhibitions of the reſult of the practice of the Artiſts, may be fairly underſtood as the barometer of their ſuppoſed importance; and the ſubjects which have ſo uniformly filled them, may be eſtimated as the higheſt idea the Public entertain of their powers. It is then, evident, from what has appeared in thoſe Exhibitions, that they have never had the advantages in this country, which thoſe of others have enjoyed to the fulleſt extent, in the moſt ample practice, and under the moſt liberal Patronage.

To what public exertion have they ever been called, or in what inſtance have they been invited to a trial that could put them on a ſcale of compariſon with thoſe of other nations? What Churches, Palaces, or other Public Edifices, have been opened to them? What King's, or Hero's Actions have they recorded, to which the Public can be referred to contemplate? What monuments of the Worth, or the Wiſdom, the Patriotiſm, or the Virtues of Individuals, or Communities, have they been called forth to give to our imitation, or our notice? Is it the want of Subjects in the hiſtory of our country deſerving to be perpetuated? Is it that we have had neither Patriot Kings, Princes, or Heroes to celebrate? Is it that our Churches, or other Public Edifices, are not ſuited for the reception of ornamental embelliſhment? Is it not, rather, the want of national policy, in not opening a free paſſage to a current which has been too long obſtructed by the blindeſt of prejudices, and the moſt hateful of Gothic barbariſms? a current forcing its way over every impediment, impatient to fertilize the barrenneſs of a ſoil which has ſo long lain waſte, a reproach to itſelf, and a bye-word among the nations.

Those Walks the Arts have been permitted to uſe, have been ſo ably filled, that the ſolicitude of expecta-

tion has been fully anſwered. But, as they have been wholly directed to local purpoſes, and the gratification of private taſte, they aſſiſt not towards forming an object, to which the general eye can be again turned, after they have once paſſed the ordeal of Exhibition. And as far as Protection has been extended to thoſe limited operations, it has been liberal; but its bounds are of too contracted dimenſion for the great body of Arts to revolve in.

To have raiſed their ſtandard on high ground, would have been an everlaſting ſtimulus to Genius: but pitched in the common high-way, within the reach of ſheer idleneſs, its luſtre muſt be ſullied; nor can it be matter of wonder, ſhould we find the lame and the halt among the foremoſt who aſpire to its honours. And hence it appears, that in their eſtabliſhment in this country, too much attention having been given, to what at the firſt bluſh was underſtood to be the bringing forward of Genius, in the event, has proved amoſt formidable, and, it is to be feared, a fatal obſtruction to thoſe powers, of which we were already in poſſeſſion. For, in all the retroſpects that have hitherto been had to their progreſs, it ſeems never to have entered the public mind, that we had already acquired the end propoſed, in raiſing up Genius among us; and

that the only point which remained to be accomplished, was the giving them opportunity to evince to the world that there was no task that could be propoſed to them, to which they did not find themſelves equal, and no expectation that could be formed of their abilities, they feared being able to act up to, or that they were not eager to gratify.

It may be lamented as a Public misfortune, that at the commencement of that truly patriotic and laudable inſtitution, the Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures, and Commerce, while their revenues were equal to the taſk, that their views were ſo circumſcribed as to aim only at the diſcovering, and calling forth of Genius, and that they did not embrace the idea of giving permanency to its operations, whenever their firſt object was obtained. If they could not have given ſcope to its exertions when raiſed, it was ſubjecting the character of the nation to a ſeverer laſh than it had already ſuſtained; in the ſarcaſms of the ſupercilious of the French writers, and the inhumanity imputable to ſuch an experiment ſhould have been ſtudiouſly avoided; for of all others, it is the moſt aggravating of inſults, to raiſe laudable expectations in ingenuous minds, for no other end than to

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ſee with what agony they expire, under the excruciating tortures of neglect. And there remains but one excuſe for the injury this important object has ſuſtained, namely, a grounded belief of the impoſſibility of there ever being ſuch a ſpark of the Divine Spirit deſtined to fall on theſe Iſlands, to "lighten our darkneſs." Diſgraceful concluſion! fit only for the arrogant folly of a rival nation, whoſe repeated defeats in their overweening preſumption, have not yet had the efficacy to teach them the value of modeſty, or the virtues of ſincerity. To their confuſion and amazement, this injurious prejudice has been rooted out, and done away, and the Genius of the Britiſh Arts has obtained a ſeat among the foremoſt of other nations. But, as the laſt offspring of a parent that had filled the world with the renown of all her other progeny, and had ſeen them powerful and revered, the *honour* of that atchievement is likely to remain its only inheritance.

The complaint, therefore, ſo often urged of the want of energy, in the Works of the Britiſh Artiſts; of their limited abilities, expreſſive of nothing Original; with a long *et cetera* of pertinent obſervations to their detriment, are as injurious, as falſe in their principle, and an injuſtice to them of the moſt flagrant kind. To ſhield their Cha-

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racter from a reproach ſo unwarrantable, this inſult has been met in its moſt formidable ſhape, and the ungenerous prejudice ſo ſtrongly imbibed againſt them, challenged to an open deciſion. They waited not the excitements of reward to give proof of their ſtrength, but in the warmth of enthuſiaſtic ardour, they preſented themſelves voluntarily to combat the Hydra which had openly, and covertly, annoyed their progreſs to univerſal eſteem. But, by a fatality which has too uniformly attended the Public movements of the Britiſh Arts, not only St. Paul's Cathedral has been deprived of a noble benefaction of Paintings, to which the Royal Academy had propoſed to preſent it, for the embelliſhment of the wide waſte of its ſolitary inſide, agreeable to the original deſign of Sir Chriſtopher Wren, but alſo the Arts of the moſt deſirable Sanctuary, in which to depoſit a memorial of their Genius, dedicated to the honour of their country.* And the idea that the admiſſion of Pictures into our Churches, would be alarming weak minds with the fear of a reſtoration of Popery among us, has, hitherto, ſhut up the moſt honour-

* For a more particular account of this tranſaction, ſee the Life and Anecdotes of that decided Patron of the Arts, the Right Reverend Dr. *Thomas Newton*, late Lord Biſhop of Briſtol, and Dean of St. Paul's, prefixed to the new edition of his Works, page 105, quarto.

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able avenue the Arts could have wiſhed open, through which to have engaged the Public attention to the importance of their being properly applied.

I cannot diſmiſs this ſingular occurrence, without taking a curſory view of the Objections which have prevailed againſt the practice of decorating Proteſtant Churches with Paintings. And I muſt, in reſpect to the venerable authority which over-ruled the propoſition I have juſt recapitulated*, ſuppoſe, that it had not been maturely an object of conſideration, before the deciſion was made againſt it. For, with regard to real grounds of the fears ſuggeſted, I do not feel it hazarding too bold an expreſſion in ſaying, that a Hereſy in our principles of faith altogether, might be more reaſonably expected to take place, than, that from the remove we have made from the foot of the Croſs as an Object of our Adoration, we ſhould be again found proſtrating ourſelves before Stocks, Stones, or Pictures, as mediums through which we ſhould be perſuaded to offer up our devotions to Heaven, notwith-

* The Right Reverend Dr. *Terrick*, late Lord Biſhop of London, who, nevertheleſs, is ſuppoſed to have been aſſiſting in furniſhing the Picture of the Annunciation in the Chapel of Clare-hall, Cambridge. Vide Life and Anecdotes of the late Biſhop of Briſtoll

ſtanding

ſtanding the unhallowed fires with which the ever memorable year *eighty* inſulted divine patience, and human underſtanding, to ſcare us from the pretended danger.

If, indeed, we were about to call in the aids of Catholic Divines to point out to us thoſe ſubjects they might think moſt ſuitable to ſuch places, and purpoſes, there can be no doubt their zeal for the religion they profeſs, would ſuggeſt to them the adopting of ſuch as would lead the moſt directly to its ſupport, and the Croſs would again be ſeen raiſed for Adoration, and the Godhead perſonified in a manner which has already ſufficiently diſgraced their own religion, and offended the purity of of our's, beyond the poſſibility of reconcilement. But that blind, indiſcriminating reprobation of ſuitable Decoration and Ornament, which in their effects aid devotion, and act as aſſiſtants to our meditations, ſavours too much of the ſpirit we would decry in theirs, to be a recommendation of our religion. Would it not be weakneſs in the extreme, to ſuſpect ſuch Ornaments of other powers than what they ſo unreſervedly, ſo openly declare in the Subjects they repreſent? But let us enquire, under what ſanction and reſtriction, an Altar-piece could poſſibly find its way into one of our Churches. It is the province of

its Miniſter to controul every meaſure that can be taken in ſuch caſes. Would he ſuffer an Ornament of that importance to be brought into his Church, without informing himſelf of the Subject? As a Miniſter, he is competent to diſtinguiſh proper, from improper Subjects, and to decide on a point in which he is generally conſulted in the firſt inſtance; and on that deciſion, confidence might ſurely be ſafely repoſed. But in addition to his controul, many other appeals are open, ſufficient to detect impoſture, correct the abuſe of indulgence, and guard the ſanctity of our Altars from Prophanation and Idolatry, allowing at the ſame time, the application of ſuitable ornament, and ſolemn embelliſhment, illuſtrating our devotion, and lifting our minds to the contemplation of the Divine Being, free from the contamination of Bigotry, or the dark influence of Superſtition. If Scriptural Subjects in Painting, be unfit for our Churches, they are leſs ſuitable to our domeſtic habitations, and ought therefore to be wholly ſuppreſſed: for it is incompatible with our reverence of the duties they inculcate, that we ſhould ſuffer their examples to be pourtrayed for the decoration of our houſes, if they are capable of ſuch dangerous violences to our faith, and modes of worſhip, as are aſcribed to them, when found in our Churches, in the proportion the evil com-

plained of in public, being ſo much multiplied, in their being found in almoſt every houſe we enter. But in theſe matters, we are ſeen ridiculouſly ſtraining at a Gnat, and ſwallowing a Camel, to the great entertainment of thoſe who may indulge ſpeculation on this ſingular fact: in Churches dedicated to the ſervice of Chriſtianity, it ſhall be extremely obnoxious to the profeſſion of its faith, to have repreſentations of the moſt intereſting paſſages of its hiſtory, held forth to the contemplation of its followers, "in the likeneſs of any thing that is in heaven above, or "in the earth beneath, or in the waters under the earth," yet in theſe ſame Churches, on the tombs even of the Teachers and Preachers of that faith, not to mention thoſe of the Princes, Stateſmen, Heroes, and illuſtrious Characters of all deſcriptions, the Mythology of the Heathens ſhall be ranſacked, for virtues deſcriptive of theirs; and Paganiſm alone is found equal to indicate, or illuſtrate, the variety of accompliſhments and fortunes, which have diſtinguiſhed, and accompanied them through life. Have they been celebrated for their Wiſdom and Eloquence, Minerva and her Owl are to explain the fact. Have they "fought with beaſts at Epheſus," or, in other words, have they encountered difficulties, Hercules, with his Club, muſt enforce the recollection of them upon us. In fine, we might

enumerate the whole ſuite of Heathen Deities, Cœleſtial and Infernal, from Jupiter Olympus to the meaneſt Devil in the train of Pluto, called into the ſervice of modern Chriſtianity, and find them in company with Angels of ſtone, ſounding forth the imputed virtues of the defunct in concert, in which an Arch-Angel ſummoning the world to judgement, is often ſeen performing as ſecond to the Heathen trumpeter, Fame. And, if we follow the induſtrious Antiquary of futurity, whoſe reſearches ſhould be unfortunately turned on the heterogeneous ruins of ſuch a *Chriſtian Pantheon*, we may eaſily anticipate his perplexity, and excuſe him, if he ſhould be in doubt, as an honeſt countryman of our own was ſaid to be, on viewing the Church of St. Paul's, the unuſual figure of which ſurpriſed him into an enquiry, " whether it was made here, or brought from beyond ſea."

To numbers of ſerious, and devout Chriſtians, it is however neceſſary to propoſe this matter to their unbiaſſed judgment, with a temper ſuited to its weight; and in which no violence to their feelings ſhould be offered. It is a ſubject, indeed, highly befitting the duties and characters of their Paſtors, and in itſelf ſo conſonant to the liberal ſentiments of that enlightened and venerable body,

that a doubt cannot remain of their being advocates for a practice ſo void of guile, ſo inſtructive, ſo conformable to all the purpoſes of the pureſt religion, and the moſt orthodox belief, whenever expediency may demand their attention to an object ſo worthy of it. To their prudence and their protection I reſign, and take leave to recommend, this ſubject, as juſtly deſerving a notice ſo honourable.

Nor will an objection lie againſt the Appeal of the Arts for proper ſupport on pecuniary grounds. It would be the moſt diſgraceful of all other evaſions, in a great and opulent nation, to urge ſuch an argument in palliation, or excuſe. The example of every other kingdom and ſtate, directly, and fully, refutes all objections of that kind, witneſs the hiſtory of each of them, at the period in which they were moſt ſedulouſly cultivated and rewarded, from Pope Julius the ſecond, to the Elector Palatine, John William, who founded the Gallery of Duſſeldorff amidſt the ſmoking ruins of his other cities on the Rhine. It has been their fate to have had difficulties to encounter, which no human foreſight could provide againſt, or prevent; they have been compelled to force their way through national extremities of the moſt gloomy aſpect; but, as the offſpring of peace, as the children of

nature

nature and urbanity, every arm was raiſed to ſhield and protect them, and they were ſupported, and honourably borne through the ſtorm that raged round their cradle.

When it is conſidered, that from materials of ſuch trifling value as are uſed in Painting and Sculpture, that Works of ſuch worth are produced, and thoſe as intrinſically ſo, as any article that can be named, after the neceſſities of life, and the various operations of Society are accounted for, it is wonderful, that to a nation like our's, whoſe power is ſeated on its Commerce, it ſhould never have occurred to carry to perfection, by every poſſible means, all the powers the Arts poſſeſs; and by ſtoring itſelf with its native productions, induce others to become purchaſers in turn, as we ourſelves have ſo long and liberally been of the Works of the Foreign Schools. This idea has neither novelty, nor extravagance in it, however it may ſtrike thoſe, whoſe attention was never bent on ſuch purſuits; but when they find, upon examination, that it has been a Cuſtom of as old an eſtabliſhment as the revival of the Arts in Europe, under Cimabue, to ſend commiſſions for Pictures, Statues, &c. to thoſe States where the Arts flouriſhed moſt; and that immenſe ſums have been alſo expended in the purchaſe of Works which

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had no particular deſignation, but from the extraordinary merit they poſſeſſed, the earneſtneſs with which this Object is offered to Public Conſideration, will ceaſe to operate as a wonder. While we lacked the reſources of Art, the rage for foreign ſupply partook more of a virtue than a fault, in that it evinced a love for their purſuits; but in the moment we have ſucceeded to their indiſputable inheritance, an opinion to which every other nation has long ſince ſubſcribed, inſomuch that very honourable commiſſions have been repeatedly received by our Artiſts, from every one of them in turn, in that moment to ſee ſuch palpable inattention to our own Intereſt and Honour, as the neglecting to give energy to undertakings in the Hiſtorical line of Painting, (for that is the only object that can hope for ready acceptance with other nations) is a ſight requiring a greater degree of Stoiciſm to avoid feeling, and more of ingenuity to fathom the good Policy of, than has fallen to my ſhare.

It is with no pleaſure that I enter on a recapitulation of the labours of the Engliſh School, as they are known to be ſo few; it is the leſs pleaſant, when I am not empowered to hold them all forth as inſtances of National Patronage; and it is ſtill leſs ſo, in that it is to ſtand on the other ſide

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of an account ſtated of the French School, the ſum total of which is ſo large, and filled with articles of ſuch magnitude and worth. Let it however ſpeak for itſelf, and its diminutive amount, anſwer thoſe who are loudeſt in their demands on Genius, but whoſe attention to it has gone no farther than to ſuppreſs by ſtigmatizing it, and to deſtroy, by neglecting it.

In the Cathedral of Rocheſter, *the Angels appearing to the Shepherds*, an Altar-piece, by Mr. Weſt.

In the Church of St. Stephen, Walbrook, *Devout Men taking up the Body of Stephen, after he had been ſtoned*, an Altar-piece, by Mr. Weſt; who may juſtly claim the merit of having preſented it to that Church, as he received for that Picture but One hundred and fifty guineas.

In the Chapel of Trinity College, Cambridge, *St. Michael and the Devil*, an Altar-piece, by Mr. Weſt; preſented by the Right Reverend Dr. Hinchliffe, Lord Biſhop of Peterborough.

In Stationer's Hall, London, *Alfred the Great dividing a Loaf with a Pilgrim*, by Mr. Weſt; preſented by Mr. Alderman Boydell.

In

In the Cathedral of Winchester, *the Raising of Lazarus*, an Altar-piece, by Mr. West.

In the Chapel of Clare-Hall, Cambridge, *the Annunciation*, by Mr. Cipriani.

In the great window of Salisbury Cathedral, *the Raising of the Brazen Serpent in the Wilderness*, painted on glass, by Mr. Pearson, from the design of the late Mr. Mortimer; presented by the Right Honourable the Earl of Radnor.

In the great window of New College, Oxford, *the Nativity, and the Cardinal Virtues*, painted on glass, by Messieurs Jarvis, from the original Pictures, by Sir Joshua Reynolds.

In the principal window of the library of Trinity College, Cambridge,—a subject in which the great *Chancellor Bacon*, and *Sir Isaac Newton*, Students in that Society, are introduced; painted on glass, by Mr. Becket, of York, from a design by Mr. Cipriani.

To this List, which comprehends all I have been able to collect, it is not expected I should add those Pictures at the Foundling, and Bartholomew's hospitals, presented to them

them by the late Mr. Hogarth, the Chevalier Caſali, and others. Nor that in All Souls College, Oxford, which, although ordered ſince the Arts were eſtabliſhed among us, cannot form a part of the preſent arrangement of Public Works, as that learned Society, from motives expreſſive of refined taſte, thought it adviſable to commiſſion the Chevalier Mengs, a German Painter, then at Rome, to furniſh them with an Altar-piece. Neither is it to be expected, that the ſeries of Subjects from the Engliſh Hiſtory, carrying on by Mr. Weſt, of which *the Death of General Wolfe* began, and *the Battles of the Boyne*, and *La Hogue*, are a continuation*; nor yet *the Death of the late Earl of Chatham*, by Mr. Copley, ſhould be aſcribed to Public Patronage given to Hiſtorical Painting. In neither of theſe inſtances has it been applied. The firſt Subjects were preſented by the Painters, and the Print engraved after that Maſter-piece of Mr. Hogarth, *the March to Finchley*, has, in its dedication, an indelible mark of the want of Protection the native Arts of this

* This Work owes its origin to the failure of a ſimilar undertaking, towards the carrying on of which a public-ſpirited Gentleman had appropriated the ſum of 15000*l.* for painting a Series of Pictures from the Hiſtory of England, by our moſt eminent Artiſts, and from which Engravings were to have been executed. The celebrated Picture of *the Death of General Wolfe* was begun, and meant to have been the firſt Subject produced, on that Plan.

Country experienced, in his pointed addreſs of it to the *King of Pruſſia, as an Encourager of the Arts!* The ſecond was ſent out of the kingdom to a foreigner. The others were Works of Speculation, begun by the Artiſts themſelves, without commiſſion, or the leaſt dependance of their ever being diſpoſed of. If, in any of theſe caſes, the Artiſts had not been known to poſſeſs abilities worthy to have been employed, the queſtion would have been unneceſſary for me to put at this time,—how it comes to paſs, that, in the moſt peremptory and decided language, it is inſiſted on, that the moſt liberal encouragement is given to the Engliſh Artiſts? Is it becauſe a *Guinea* is ſubſcribed to the purchaſe of a *Print* from thoſe Pictures, for which the Painters, in ſuper-addition to their own ſpeculative labours, venture on the heavy expences attending the laborious operations of Engraving them? Or is it, becauſe from motives of prudence, impelled by the neglect they have experienced, they are unwillingly forced on the expedient of challenging attention, by offering thoſe Works to public view, and of ſetting the price of a *Shilling* on the humiliating Practice? But this Patronage is unique, it belongs only to ourſelves; and, in addition to its other merits, is likely to produce this farther brilliant effect, namely, the making *Marchands d' Eſtampes* of our firſt

men of Genius, and reducing the ſtudy of their Profeſſions to *Connoiſſeurſhip in proof impreſſions from Engravings.*

But, as the liſt I have produced may receive honourable augmentation, by ſtepping a little into futurity, I ſhall not reject the ſuccours of Anticipation, when it may ſerve the intereſts of truth and honour. Thoſe aids, however, muſt properly belong to the Subject, or they cannot be adopted; among which, the Altar-piece for the Chapel of his Excellency the Sardinian Ambaſſador, however meritorious a performance of Mr. Rigaud's, cannot be admitted, as that commiſſion is known to have devolved on him through the *Public Spirit* which prevailed *againſt thoſe Abominations*, in the year *Eighty*, and is therefore as properly out of the pale of my enquiries, as it is out of the pale of our Church.

In the Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures, and Commerce, in the Adelphi, a very noble Work is carrying on by Mr. Profeſſor Barry; embracing in its deſign the Progreſs of Human Knowledge, from Orpheus to the preſent times, and poſſeſſing the whole circumference of their Great Room, an extent of upwards of One hundred and forty feet, and upwards of eleven feet

in height. On this Subject, however, I ſhall no farther anticipate public expectation than to premiſe, that it is a full illuſtration of all that can be urged in favour of the powers of the Pencil, in ſo much as regards the honourably recording of the actions of the Good and Virtuous of mankind, for the benefit and example of Poſterity, as well as the juſtly conſigning to infamy and abhorrence, thoſe Vices which have degraded our nature, and rendered the actions of Individuals a curſe to Society. It may not, however, be improper to notice, that this Work has roſe out of the ruins of the rejected propoſal for the decorating of St. Paul's Cathedral; and, indeed, I ſhould be induced to enter more copiouſly into its Hiſtory, but for the ſhare I myſelf had in firſt propoſing it to that Body, under another form than that it at preſent aſſumes; a tranſaction of which the records of the inſtitution, of the year 1774, bear teſtimony*, too flattering to my humble attempts to be uſeful to its views, through a medium which I conceived would, while it more particularly honoured that Society, have been ſerviceable to the intereſts of the Arts at large, if I may be

* See alſo Mr. Barry's Inquiry into the real and imaginary Obſtructions to the Acquiſition of the Arts in England, chap. xi. pages 144, 145, 146: and the Preface to the third Volume of "Memoirs of Agriculture and other Œconomical Arts;" by Robert Doſſie, Eſq. pages 27, 28.

allowed

allowed to draw ſuch an inference from the approbation it alſo met from the Artiſts, ſelected by the Society for carrying that propoſal into execution, notwithſtanding its completion failed, from an objection ſtarted by ſome of them, but which, afterwards, by others who had concurred in that objection, would have been entered upon *de novo*, and in iſſue, has been productive of the preſent arduous undertaking. In the ſhape it now offers, I feel myſelf happy to have been the ſucceſsful agent by whom Mr. Barry's propoſal was made known to, and carried through the Society, in that it proves a ſtrong, collateral evidence, that the original propoſition I had the honour to offer to their conſideration, was not ſo repugnant to their inclinations, although it had ſubjected them to a very conſiderable expence; but that, on the contrary, they were ſtill ready to attend to a ſimilar propoſal. And their honouring my repreſentation of it by their attention and concurrence, has completed my ſatisfaction, in the reflection that it has ſecured one public ſtation, in which the great line of the Arts of this Country may aſſert its claim to National regard, and eventually farther the intereſt of that public-ſpirited Inſtitution. This ſignal proof of the abilities, and laborious perſeverance of Mr. Barry, will ſhortly be laid before the Public, and for the honour of its diſcern-

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ment and liberality, it cannot be doubted, as it has been ſpared the labour and expence of calling it into exiſtence, it will meet with its warmeſt approbation; for, however ſingular, it is a fact, that this Work was undertaken, and the Artiſt has been unremittingly employed in carrying it on for theſe five years paſt, with no other ſupport than a ſupply of Canvas, Colours, and Models! Does this inſtance of Patronage ſtand in need of a comment? Let me, however, do juſtice to the Inſtitution, which, it muſt be conſidered, is not founded for the excluſive purpoſes of the Arts, nor can they appropriate their revenues to the purchaſe of Pictures, however valuable. Manufactures, and Commerce, ſubdivided into all the branches they include, are alſo objects to which the views of that Society are equally bound to attend, and encourage. In one word, a Society, having beſtowed on the Polite Arts full one-third of the whole ſum (amounting to about 25000 *l.*) they have expended on the ſeveral objects which have claimed their encouragement, cannot be arraigned on their want of attention to their intereſts, with a ſhadow of juſtice. And, indeed, more of their ſucceſs in theſe kingdoms is owing to the reputation they at firſt obtained from that Society, than many of its Profeſſors ſeem aware of, or are inclinable to allow. It is not to that Inſtitution

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the Arts are always to be referred for the Patronage they require. I have already ſhewn that the principles of its eſtabliſhment, unfortunately, did not provide for ſo neceſſary a reſource; and which, being laid no deeper than on the grounds of voluntary contribution, is itſelf ſubjected to the ſame wants of aſſiſtance. To the Public, therefore, we muſt ſtill recur, and from that ſource alone expect an efficient Protection befitting itſelf to offer, and the Arts to accept.

THE Royal Hoſpital at Greenwich, with not quite ſo rooted an antipathy to Painting as what ſome other Public bodies have poſſeſſed, but certainly far more competent to judge of its importance, by its effects, have commiſſioned Mr. Weſt to paint *the Shipwreck of St. Paul on the Iſland of Melita*, where he was attacked by a Viper, for the Altar-piece of its Chapel, as ſoon as its renovation is completed. But I hear an outcry, Does it not outrage the precaution of Prudence, and ſhock the provident ſchemes of Oeconomy, that ſo much money ſhould be ſuffered to be drawn out of the funds of a Charity of ſuch ſingular utility as that Noble Aſſylum is known to be to our decayed Seamen, merely for the purchaſe of a *Picture?* On a meaſure ſo ſeemingly idle, much good argument might be adduced, in repre-

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ſenting it as ruinous, and deſtructive in its conſequences; and through many a gloomy point of view might we be led to behold the future downfall of that Royal Houſe, by thoſe peſtilent deſtroyers of the Arts, and its ruin ſpeciouſly traced to that ſource. *Sed audi et alteram partem*, is a maxim which theſe ſagacious prognoſticators ſhould be compelled to admit, where Truth is ſubjected to the hazard of their deciſion. Greenwich Hoſpital is known to be in poſſeſſion of the only Painted Hall we have hitherto to boaſt of in the kingdom, Windſor excepted; and there is not a viſitor to that magnificent Palace, but makes that room a part of his obſervation; yet, although terms of admiſſion are not preſcribed, and even halfpence are offered, and received for that indulgence, the annual amount of ſhewing that Hall, on an average, is upwards of 300 *l.* If, therefore, we calculate that produce from the year 1715, when part of the monies ariſing out of the cuſtom of ſhewing it to the Public, were firſt appropriated to the purpoſe of placing out the Sons of the Penſioners as Apprentices, to the preſent time, it will be found to have produced the ſum of *Twenty thouſand and one hundred pounds.*

If this fact proves any thing, it proves that the Nation has been eſſentially injured in not employing our Artiſts in forming bodies of Works ſimilar to the one I have here inſtanced; that more than the virtue of Oeconomy is ſometimes neceſſary to the attainment of Riches; and that Arithmetical calculations are never more uncertain, than when applied to matters of Taſte, and Works of ſuperior Genius, which are influenced by cauſes far beyond their contracted optics clearly to comprehend, or fairly to account for, with all their feebleneſs of foreſight, and miſerable contrivance.

I know of no ſtriking inſtance in the line of Sculpture, on which Public Patronage has ſhed its influence, excepting thoſe of the Statue of the late Earl of Chatham, erected in the Guildhall of the City of London, and his Monument preparing for Weſtminſter Abbey, by Mr. Bacon; and the Monument intended to commemorate the three Gallant Officers * who fell in that glorious conflict with the French fleet in the Weſt Indies on the 12th of April, the Deſign of which has been laid before, and approved of, by his Majeſty, by that able ſculptor Mr. Nollekens.

* Lord Robert Manners, Captain Bayne, and Captain Blair.

To thoſe Acts of Public Munificence, very great honour is indeed to be aſcribed: and I congratulate my Country, on the certain proſpect it has of being fully convinced, that where their liberality is ſuffered to operate in favour of ſterling Genius, the reſult muſt be glorious to both, and reflect a laſting ſplendour on the National Generoſity, and Diſcernment. The abilities of theſe Artiſts deſerve the unlimited Protection of their Country: nor are others of their Profeſſion leſs worthy its warmeſt regards.

To theſe, as Public Works, executed, carrying on, and under contemplation, I ſhall add ſuch other Sculptures as come under that deſcription, and have reached my knowledge, from the beſt information.

In the Royal Exchange, *A Statue of his preſent Majeſty*, by Mr. Wilton.

In Weſtminſter Abbey, *The Monument of General Wolfe*, by Mr. Wilton.

In Cavendiſh-Square, *An equeſtrian Statue of the late Duke of Cumberland*, by Sir Henry Cheere.

In Berkley-Square, *An equeſtrian Statue of his preſent Majeſty*, by Mr. Wilton.

In the Guildhall of the City of London, *A Statue of the Right Honourable William Beckford, Eſq.* by Mr. Moore.

For the laſt, and moſt important article I have to add to this anticipated catalogue of Public Patronage, atchieved by the Engliſh School, I betake me to the Royal Towers of Windſor, where is moſt fully evinced, that in one ſpot of this Iſland at leaſt, Hiſtorical Painting has an aſylum opened to it, on the baſis of that inſpiring principle—a perfect knowledge of its importance, and an eſteem for its powers.

Could the firſt example in the nation have influenced a practice, in which its Intereſt and its Arts could be reciprocally promoted, and the memory of the preſent age made more grateful to poſterity, that Princely and Magnificent Work carrying on by Mr. Weſt, for the King's Chapel in the Caſtle at Windſor, two Subjects of which ſuite of Pictures have already paſſed through the Exhibitions of the Royal Academy, viz. *Chriſt healing the Sick*, and *The Aſcenſion*, we might then have ſeen other inſtances of regard paid to

a purſuit ſo full of pleaſurable advantage, and ſo proper for the moſt earneſt attention of the Nobleman, the Gentleman, the Scholar and the Philanthropiſt. By ſuch purſuits, ſteadily maintained, the inroads of Vice and Diſſipation, the torrent of Luxury and Frivolity, the torpor of Sloth and Idleneſs, and the contemptible nothingneſs of our employments, might have been, in part, prevented, and our views directed to objects more worthy an enlightened people. But in this, as in numberleſs other inſtances of the beneficent purpoſes of its Auguſt Founder, it is left to act ſingly and alone. In happier times, when the rage of Party has ſubſided, and the miſt which has ſo long hood-winked our reaſon is diſſipated, the value of theſe inſtances of Royal Munificence will become more viſible, their motives more applauded, and, perhaps, more imitated. In this ſplendid Work, a full teſt will alſo be held forth to the preſent and future ages, that without injury to the grounds of our faith, Proteſtant Churches may admit of rational embelliſhment, and the pure ſimplicity of our devotions remain ſacred and untouched.

But what ſhall be ſaid of a deſign of a ſimilar nature, ſet on foot for the decoration of its neighbouring Collegiate Church, with Subjects analogous to the ceremony of

Inſtalling

Inſtalling the Knights of the Garter, which is performed in its Choir, to be painted on Glaſs, to fill its Eaſt Window? To have looked beyond a certain deſcription of elevated Characters for means to carry into execution whatever might contribute to ſo marked a purpoſe, and which would alſo include an elegant Compliment in return for the diſtinction the Royal Family have paid it, by honouring that Church by their Aſſiſtance at Divine Service, (which motive, indeed, is ſaid to have given riſe to the meaſure in the Chapter,) muſt have been tranſgreſſing againſt every idea of Propriety. It accordingly received their concurrence. The Propoſition failed, however, in its original conſtruction, but was not wholly abandoned: it had met ſome attention, but was made to give way to a new arrangement, and to receive this ſingular improvement in its Plan: It was now propoſed to embelliſh that Church with *Copies of ſome of the celebrated Italian Pictures, and to ſend commiſſions to Rome for that purpoſe!* Is it poſſible to conceive that ſuch a ſtab ſhould be deliberately aimed at the vitals of the Britiſh Arts, by any one whoſe province it is, from an elevated ſituation, and princely fortune, to have given aid to their eſtabliſhment, to have ſeconded the views of the Sovereign in foſtering, maturing, and perfecting them in

their

their native Country, and to have ſtood forth their decided Patron and Friend, to the eyes of all Europe? It had been hoped that the College of All-Souls, Oxford, had been ſingle in their opinion of the Engliſh Artiſts, and would have preſerved to itſelf the excluſive enjoyment of that very *liberal* ſentiment; but the inſtance before us has far outſtripped their refinements; *Copies* by the *Copying Painters* of Italy, were to be preferred to Originals by Britiſh Artiſts, and were to be *decently* placed before the eyes of that Prince, whoſe Paternal goodneſs was exerting every nerve to bring forward National excellence among his own Subjects; in contact alſo with a Royal Chapel, profeſſedly opened by his Gracious Munificence, to receive the Offerings of Native Genius on its Altar! But, happy in the poſſeſſion of the fixed regards of Royal Patronage, our School has been ſhielded from the injury meditated againſt its honour, under that benign influence from whence alone has flowed the chief Protection with which the elegant Arts have hitherto been cheared, and which has condeſcended to direct this final amendment to the foregoing propoſitions, viz. the Subject of *The Reſurrection* is to occupy the centre diviſion of the Window; *Peter and John*, the bottom of that to its right; and *The Three Marys*, in a correſponding ſituation, in the

left

left diviſion. Over Peter and John, the *Royal Arms, ſurrounded by thoſe of the preſent Knights of the Garter*; and anſwerable to it, *thoſe of Eward the Third*, founder of the Order, *encompaſſed by thoſe of the firſt Knights Companions*. Theſe are finally ſurmounted by *the Creſt of the Prince of Wales* to the right, to which *that of Edward the Black Prince* is oppoſed on the left. This arrangement has been adjuſted by Mr. Weſt, who has received orders to prepare the Deſigns from which they are to be executed, on glaſs, by Mr. Jarvis; and alſo to prepare an Altar-piece, the Subject of which is, *The Laſt Supper*; a Preſent from his Majeſty to that Church.

Here ends my Catalogue!!!

Modern Patronage might, however, have eſcaped this weight of reproach, had theſe few Public inſtances of the employment of the Britiſh Pencils been given to them in Commiſſions: but, to put the abſence of that Virtue out of all poſſible doubt, we find that the greateſt proportion of thoſe Works are the *Gifts of the Artiſts themſelves*, if we exclude the Royal Commands! In oppoſition to this ſtubborn fact, let it now be ſhewn, whether any other deſcription of men, dependant on a Profeſſion for their

ſupport,

ſupport, have devoted ſo much of their time to the voluntary ſervice of the Community, or who have been ſo much inſulted by the parade of *Mock Patronage?*

The ſenſible, philoſophic, and manly Richardſon, who wrote from genuine feelings, who ſaw the Arts through no falſe glare, no vitiated medium, in the enthuſiaſm of his ardour, in recommending their ſerious cultivation to his Country, draws this encouraging inference from the premiſſes: "Thus" (ſays he) "a thing as yet unheard "of, and whoſe very name (to our diſhonour) has at "preſent an uncouth ſound, may come to be eminent in "the world, I mean the Engliſh School of Painting; "and, whenever this happens, who knows to what "heights it may riſe; for the Engliſh nation is not "accuſtomed to do things by halves." Peace to his Patriot Spirit! it was his laſt, beſt wiſh that it ſhould not of all others, in that inſtance, be a reproach to it. But he has been ſpared the mortification of ſeeing an Engliſh School eſtabliſhed, its Members in the habit of ſucceſsful practice in their various walks, for upwards of twenty years, acknowledged by the world to have long ſince ſurpaſſed in every excellence the united Abilities of all living competitors, and to have made ſucceſsful inroads on the

credit

credit of the firſt names in the ſeveral Schools of Europe, Italy not excepted; with every teſtimony of merit in their favour, with every feeling alive to the honour of its name, they languiſh for want of healthful exerciſe, and are left to deprecate their ever having liſtened to a call which promiſed them Glory, but which has ſubjected them to Neglect and Diſregard.

I propoſed to myſelf in the Plan of this Addreſs, not to draw inferences from the reputed Abilities of either School, but ſimply to ſtate what has been the reſult of the two foundations from the Patronage they originally received.

In the French School, we find its Patronage was warm, fervent, and dignified; partaking of every ſtimulating principle that could invigorate, enliven, and cheriſh its objects, and place them on a permanent baſis, beyond the reach of caprice to aſſail, or faſhion to impair; it ſaw them of too much importance to be trifled with, and of too much value to be abandoned.—And the reſult has been a *National Honour*.

In the Engliſh School, Public Patronage is ſeen to have been attracted more by the novelty of the undertaking,

than the importance of the purſuit. Engaged in an experiment, which if it failed, nothing was loſt, nothing being expected. Employed on a forlorne hope, of which all the world had ſaid, we were not to expect the fruition, and we ourſelves were perſuaded to believe it a preſumption to attempt.—It has conſequently terminated in a *National Diſgrace.*

For hence, when true legitimate Genius appeared, it ſurpriſed, confounded, and amazed! neither hoped, nor expected, it was aukwardly received; and its pretenſions being ſomewhat beyond the limits of mediocrity, and ſuch as we were neither accuſtomed to, nor prepared for, a dead ſtand has been put to its progreſs, and its exiſtence is neither cared for, nor enquired after. And ſtill, with our uſual *conſiſtency*, muſt we clamour! ſtill muſt we exclaim, *Oh!* for foreign aſſiſtance! and *ah!* for external aid!!

But enough, ſurely, has been ſacrificed to the ſupercilious vanity of our half-formed *Conoſcenti*, in the run they have been pleaſed to make on the Modern Profeſſors of the Arts. Every blame has been freely laid at their door,

door, and every abuſe and inſult heaped upon them in oppoſition to their pretenſions to Public countenance, whenever they have had the courage to appear at the bar of its tribunal. To read the ſcurrility with which they are attacked, to mark the venom and inveteracy with which they are aſperſed, one cannot but turn aſide from them with indignant horror, and bewail the baſeneſs of the principles on which ſuch depraved ſentiments are founded. Under theſe promulgated falſehoods, the pretended Patron takes ſhelter, and has his anſwer in *Print* to the claims of injured Merit, bleeding from the wounds of the hidden Aſſaſſin. To become eminent in the Arts is an Herculean taſk; and many ſecret and open Hydras are to be encountered on the way. To a ſtrength of Genius, a ſtrong Mind is alſo neceſſary; and to both, a contempt for the giddy applauſe of the multitude, and the deſpicable revilings of the malevolent, are equally indiſpenſible. The Britiſh Artiſts ſtand acquitted in the face of the world, that they have been aſſiduous, vigilant, and ſucceſsful in their practice. They have on their own ideas of the honour of their Profeſſion faced every difficulty unſupported, and have undertaken Pilgrimages to the Italian ſhrines out of the pureſt zeal for the Arts; but their return has been marked with no encouraging

proſpect, and their legends of the miracles of their Saints have dropped into the ears of their Patrons more tireſome than the repeated tales of old age, and more irkſome than the ſqualling of infants to antiquated maidens. A purſuit ſo diſcouraging, a ſervice ſo full of anxious care, ſhould have ſtrong incitements to draw ſo many votaries to its temple. This *ignis fatuus*, is, however, found to be no other than the recorded fame of former Veterans, and the report made of the honours they had ſeverally acquired. None act more powerfully on generous minds than ſuch examples, nor is it a reproach, but an honour to thoſe who have, from ſuch influence, had courage to devote themſelves to face ſuch odds, when ſo many nearer, and eaſier paths were open to the fane of Fortune. It is this palpable, this damnable ſin againſt the cooler dictates of Prudence, that excites the contempt of the more provident of mankind; and hence, thoſe who have committed it ſtand proſcribed their ſociety, and expelled their counſels. Every ſordid hand is lifted againſt them, and they are curſed with the fate of *Caſſandra*; though true prophets, their report is not to be believed, nor can they hope to obtain juſtice till out of the reach of envy, and mixed with the duſt of the earth, they receive it in the incenſe of an impartial and grateful Poſterity.

I have

I have been led into this train of reflection, from the retroſpect I have taken of the manner in which the Arts of this Country have ariſen to eminence, notwithſtanding the uniform *neglect* they have combated. I may be cenſured for this aſſertion, but let me be refuted by irrefragable proof, ere I am required to retract it. And, among others, that may be thought to incur a ſimilar doubt, let this be given me back as a vague, unfounded inſtance of the want of the true ſpirit of Patronage the Arts ſhould have experienced.

The Houghton collection of Pictures was known to have been intended for ſale long ere the Empreſs of Ruſſia was in treaty for it. What then could have been ſo proper an Object for Public attention, as that the Royal Academy ſhould have been empowered to enter into treaty for it, and have been enabled to have purchaſed it, if not on their own account, on the behalf of the State. We have a Magnificent Public Structure raiſing on the ſcite of Somerſet-Houſe, in which the Engliſh School of Art, by the protecting hand of the Royal Founder, is nobly lodged. The Royal and Antiquarian Societies, have alſo, under the ſame propitious influence, their reſidence eſtabliſhed there: and we are further given

to

to underſtand, that ſeveral of the Offices of Government and the Revenues, are alſo to be accommodated in other parts of that noble edifice. A Plan ſo replete with propriety and expediency, united with dignity and grandeur of Conception in the Deſign, and executed with an elegance and preciſion to be found only in the Productions of our own Artificers, cannot but meet with the fulleſt approbation of the Public. In the other parts of this building, there will undoubtedly be ſeveral principal and elegant rooms, as well as thoſe already in the poſſeſſion of the three Societies ſettled there. Now, what more naturally occurs to thoſe who build houſes for themſelves, than the idea how they ſhall furniſh them? Upon the expanded principle of National Splendour, this edifice was voted by Parliament to be erected; and, I truſt, I ſhall not be accuſed of ſtraining my argument, to prove the propriety of Public Patronage being given to the Arts, when I aſſert, that the omiſſion of ſeizing the opportunity of buying the whole of that capital Collection of Pictures, and depoſiting them in the principal apartments of that Palace, was not only loſing the only opportunity this Country ever had of forming a School of Art that could yield the conſequence, and the uſes ſuch an eſtabliſhment ought to poſſeſs, whereby its Students might be benefitted,

and the Inſtitution become truly reſpectable; but farther, viewed in this light, the liberality of the grant itſelf was eſſentially maimed in the overſight, when we compare the inconſiderable addition of 42000 *l.* (the ſum for which that Collection ſold,) to the ſum eſtimated and voted for that Building.

That Collection of Pictures, ſo depoſited, and committed to the care and ſuperintendance of the Royal Academy, and, under their direction, laid open to the uſe of their Students, would, in conjunction with the Building, have formed, not only an object of continual delight and entertainment to ourſelves, and have been the reſort of all foreigners and ſtrangers, but alſo a School of Inſtruction, in which riſing Artiſts might have been led to improvement by the excellence of their examples. And to thoſe to whom the tour of Italy might have proved too formidable an undertaking, on a variety of conſiderations, a fund of information would have been provided; this, together with the inſtructions of the Academical Profeſſors, to aid them in their reſearches, might well have ſpared them that toil and expence, without the danger of their incurring the imputation of indolence. Let me hear nothing of the objections which might be ſtarted on the

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ſubordinate rank that Collection holds, compared to what Rome affords. It ſhould ever be remembered, that it is no where but in Rome the excellencies of that School are to be found; and it renders it no leſs our concern to avail ourſelves of ſecondary aſſiſtance, becauſe the firſt is totally unattainable. It might be ſome alleviation, indeed, of this neglect, if thoſe Rooms were left for the practice of our School, to ſupply them with decorations and embelliſhments; but I am apprehenſive I have already proved too much, to leave a hope exiſting of that ever being the caſe; ſince, as the collection we have loſt, had neither the fault of being Modern, or of our own Productions, it is not very probable its being torne from us may prove any advantage to our own Artiſts. Mean time, an Empire, which but yeſterday reared its head among the States of Europe, riſing forth from its deſerts and its wilderneſſes, with the avidity which has marked its rapid progreſs to dominion, in every political intercourſe, ſeized the honourable Prize, and has now to boaſt the poſſeſſion of a ſtore of Art that would have ſhed luſtre on any Nation.

May I not, in this place, anſwer the reiterated queſtion of modern Patrons, when they demand, with ſuch emphaſis, under the preſcription Richardſon holds out to a

Connoiſſeur,

Connoiſſeur, Where is " the capricious but vaſt Genius " of Lionardo da Vinci; the fierce and gigantic one of " Michael Angelo; the divine and polite one of Raphael; " the poetical fancy of Giulio; the angelic mind of " Corregio, or Parmagiano; the haughty, ſullen, but ac- " compliſhed Annibal; the learned Agoſtino Caracci," to be found in your Works? by aſking another of them in turn,—To what purpoſe would be the attainment of all, or any of theſe accompliſhments, ſuppoſing Modern Artiſts to be wanting in each particular, ſeeing that neither the one, nor the other, has power to influence you in its favour?

Rousseau has obſerved, that " take from the Philo- " ſopher the pleaſure of being heard, and his deſire of " knowledge will ceaſe." He has put the caſe in the ſtrongeſt light poſſible: if therefore Philoſophy, with all its reſtraining principles, be deemed inadequate to ſuch a teſt, no wonder the active mind of an Artiſt ſhould prove too volatile for the experiments Neglect might think proper to make on the virtues of his forbearance. Under that baleful influence, ſo inhoſpitable and fatal to Genius, we ſuſtain the loſs of a *Mortimer*, who has fallen from the ſphere with but few remaining lights by which Poſterity can trace his ſhort, but brilliant courſe. Its murky clouds

 have

have likewiſe ſo enveloped others, that we have enjoyed their luſtre but tranſiently, and by intervals; whilſt ſome have changed their aſpect, and others totally diſappeared.

I truſt, however, that it will no longer remain a point to be decided, whether the Engliſh School has failed in bringing its Proofs of Ability to have added as much Honour to its Country as that of France, had it been ſupported by ſimilar Protection: and that its failure is not aſcribable to its want of Powers, but to the wrong bias into which it was idly thrown by the trifling purſuits of vitiated Public Taſte. It is, nevertheleſs, humiliating, that, with all the advantages in our hands, Poſterity will have to view with concern and regret, that after a long ſuſpenſe, the balance was ſuffered to preponderate in favour of France, and that the ſcale of England, having been filled with Trifles, has been ſuffered to "kick the beam."

I am, Sir,

Your moſt obedient,

and obliged

Humble Servant,

Newman-ſtreet, London,
Dec. 23, 1782.

V. GREEN.

POSTSCRIPT.

IT had wholly eſcaped my recollection, to introduce the following *Public Works* in their proper place, which is, at the head of the Liſt given in page 47. The overſight has ariſen from the plan I had adopted, of enumerating thoſe Productions only which properly come under that deſcription. Hence, no reference has at all been had to ſeveral Capital Hiſtorical Pictures, painted by various Engliſh Artiſts, but which are ſhut up in different Private Collections. And, in endeavouring to keep clear of that boundary, it threw me beyond a point that was meant to ſtand prominent in this Addreſs, namely, the recommending the decorating our Palaces, and other Public Edifices, with Hiſtorical Works by Britiſh Artiſts.

THE Queen's Houſe, moſt certainly, therefore, ſhould have been adverted to, and what of the Productions of the Engliſh School it poſſeſſes, ſhould have been ſtudiouſly held forth.

THAT munificent example of the Sovereign's gracious attention to the Arts, lays claim to our warmeſt gratitude, for poſſeſſing us with the following maſterly, intereſting, and valuable Works, viz.

The Departure of Regulus from Rome to Carthage, where he was put to death.

Hannibal, when he was nine years old, ſwearing enmity to the Romans, before the Altar of Jupiter.

The Death of Epaminondas.

The Death of the Chevalier Bayard.

The Death of General Wolfe.

The King of Armenia, and his Son Tigranes, brought Priſoners before Cyrus.

Segeſtes, and his Daughter, Wife of Arminius, brought Priſoners before Germanicus.

THIS ſuite of Pictures, entirely filling one apartment of the Queen's Houſe, is the Production of Mr. Weſt.

Timon of Athens, by Mr. Dance.

Peter, having denied Chriſt, by Mr. Weſt.

It were "a conſummation devoutly to be wiſhed," that in contemplating what has already been accompliſhed towards the eſtabliſhment of the Arts among us, on the moſt liberal plan, a juſt conception of what yet remains to be done, and a determination of carrying it into immediate practice, would be the reſult of that contemplation, whilſt it is yet in our power. The Arts, it is ſtill hoped, are not without ſome true Friends, nor ſo entirely ſtripped of real Patronage, as to be paſt recovery. The want even of the Higheſt Example cannot now be pleaded in extenuation of farther neglect. And it has never yet appeared, but that thoſe, who have the moſt faithfully copied that Example, in whatſoever might add dignity to rational employment, have had moſt reaſon to approve their own diſcernment in following the path it had pointed out.

ERRATA.

ERRATA.

In the motto of the Title-Page, for "YORRICK's" read—YORICK's
Page 8, line 7, after the word "Family" read—had acquired such high Reputation,
Page 15, line 8, for "de Victoire" read—des Victoires
Page 17, line 1, after the word "repine" read—at
Page 32, line 14, for "Bois" read—Bos
Page 35, line 6, from the bottom, for "amoſt" read—a moſt
Page 36, line 6, from the bottom, after the word "ſuſtained" place a *comma*, and after the word "writers," in the ſucceeding line, place a *ſemicolon*
Page 55, line 13, for "have" read—has
Page 63, line 3, for "*Eward*" read—"*Edward*"

To the indulgent candour of the Reader, ſuch Typographical, and other Errata, as may have paſſed uncorrected, are recommended.